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Developing a Survey to Establish a Baseline of Country Capacity for Evidence-Informed Policy - Making

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Background: Scientific evidence has increasingly become a policy-making input in health sectors across Europe and beyond. However, capacities in evidence-informed policy-making (EIP) remain low and/or uneven, and wide variation in implementation remains a problem. One potential solution has been the rise of knowledge translation networks to diffuse innovations and share good practice. A leading example is the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Evidence-Informed Policy Network (EVIPNet). A survey was developed to support the work of EVIPNet Europe by gathering intelligence on the use of research evidence across the region, in order to identify gaps and highlight areas in need of capacity-building.

Methods: A rapid review of published and grey literature (English only) was conducted. A draft survey was developed based on the review findings, with input from the EVIPNet team and participants in the first technical expert meeting to enhance EIP in the WHO European Region. The survey was distributed by email to this group and also discussed with national EIP champions during the third EVIPNet multi-country meeting on using research evidence for policy-making.

Results: Of the 18 studies included in the review, very few concerned EIP, particularly in an international setting. Topics incorporated into the draft survey included individual, organisational, contextual and evidence factors, as well as drivers, barriers and strategies. Feedback highlighted that the intended survey population would determine the most appropriate format and content for the survey, and vice versa. Participants also identified potential issues relating to language, which will be considered in refining the survey.

Conclusions: The final survey will enable each country in the WHO European region to establish a baseline level of evidence use in policy and practice. It will support the work of EVIPNet Europe in promoting the systematic use of research evidence in policy-making to improve health.

Main messages:

1. There is need for further research which evaluates decision-makers' capacity to access, understand and use research evidence

2. The survey findings will be used by WHO Europe to identify gaps and highlight areas in need of capacity building in relation to evidence-informed policy-making